[48 cont.]

755 from ostrich egg shells, had been put on by her proxy, Dube, a
756 very intelligent young woman. The latter, standing at the end of
796 the semicircle of seated women, conducted the ceremony. She
[276] was in a very good mood and alternately smoked her Bushman
[554] pipe and my cigarettes. There is a kind of hierarchy among the women; those who were squatting were higher in rank than those who were standing. All the women clapped their hands and sang
[533] in a monotonous rhythm: ehe, ehe, ehe, ehe, etc. This, I was assured, was no song, but "music." Some hordes have bartered

[532]

Fig. 19. Sorcerer in a Bird Mask, Followed by Spirits of Sickness. (From Rock Paintings in South Africa. From Parts of the Eastern Province and Orange Free State. Copied by G. W. Stow. With an introduction and descriptive notes by Dorothea Bleek. London, Methuen, 1930.)

dance drums one and a half meters high from the Okawango, which on this occasion are played by men. [Fig. 19 appears
[184] here.] Among the Bushmen of the Sand Veld the female leader of the ceremony does not wear the ornaments of the chief female doctor; instead, the ornaments are hung on a tree. The position of the chief female doctor is not permanently held by one person; the chief doctor on occasion imparts supernatural powers to her.

755 The five doctors had taken off all their ornaments and
756 were naked except for the front apron. They put themselves
786 into an autohypnotic state by means of crowing, by producing
796

[48 cont.]

755 756 786 796 sounds similar to those of ventriloquists, and by certain muscle contractions. By pressing together the gluteal musculature of the buttocks and at the same time holding the knee joints as far apart as possible and pressing the legs together at the ankles, they eventually produced a tonic trembling cramp of the entire musculature of the lower extremity, in which they reeled back and forth. It is possible for anyone to put himself into an autohypnotic state in this way, as this author also learned from the doctors. Soon the rolled-up eyes indicated that the doctors were in a state of trance. They danced around one another, fell over one another, and lifted one another up. Some women also started making noise with the dance rattles. The Bushmen were now convinced that [787] /Nawa himself was dancing among the doctors, was visible to them, and spoke with them. At this point they say something [782] like prayers; they invoke the great spirit of the old Bushman who has killed many elephants; they call the spirits of the dead who have sent their little spirits of sickness over the living, and they especially beg /Nawa to transfer these little spirits of sickness to the doctors.

755 756 796 The doctors ran alternately to the bitten child and to those ill with fever who squatted around the fire, stroking the painful places, both from the armpits down to the soles and from the shoulders down to the fingertips. Occasionally they also sucked at the diseased spots or inhaled the breath from the mouths of the patients.

From time to time, the doctors performed these operations upon one another, first of all, as they said, in order to distribute the poisons of sickness equally among all the doctors, but also in order to obtain power from the other doctors. Thus "charged," the doctor then again ran to the patients to take their poison.

Now and then the chief doctor ran screaming around the [787] line of standing women and [49] disappeared into the bush in order to ask the chief female doctor about the will of /Nawa. After about an hour's dancing the chief doctor went to the bitten child. The child had been bitten on the back, and this was rubbed with fat and then medicine; then all the patients were again subjected to the treatment described above, and soon thereafter /Nawa an- [787] nounced through the mouth of the chief female doctor that the

[49 cont.]

755 chief spirit was not yet satisfied, she would appease him; the chief
756 spirit would voluntarily take the little spirits of sickness away, even
796 from the doctors. After these words the festival abruptly ended; the people went to their fires and lay down to sleep.

The candidate had passed his examination (1).

[184] 1. Burchell (in the translation by Hellwald,
535 Völkerkunde [Ethnology], II, p. 519) has
756 given a similar account from the south: "One
796 foot remains stationary, while the other is in rapid and irregular motion without any definite change of position. The movement of the arms is so slight as to be negligible. At the same time the dancer sings without pause and keeps time with the movements. Occasionally he lowers his body and then suddenly raises it again, until finally he sinks to the ground exhausted, but still singing and rhythmically moving his body in time with the song of the spectators. Even though only one person dances at a time, the company present nonetheless also has something to do, etc."

756 When the excitement of the dance has
786 reached its climax and the dancers have fallen
789 into a kind of trance as a result of the continu-
796 ous dance movement, the shrill singing, the drinking of coffee, and not least the tobacco smoke, which they keep in their mouths for minutes on end for the intoxicating effect, then the doctors, in order to demonstrate their resistance to fire, trample with bare feet on the red-hot embers taken from the campfire and spread out on the sand. In the case of a number of the younger ones, however, I believe that their resistance to fire was not quite as great as they would have one believe, and they carefully avoided the pieces that were

[49 cont.]

756 786 789 796

glowing all too brightly. On the other hand, I was surprised when on the occasion of such a religious dance the so-called great doctor -- after he had danced by himself long and continuously in visible ecstasy, so that in spite of the cool night and even though he was almost completely naked, the sweat ran down his entire body -- suddenly, with slow majestic steps, walked through the high flames of the fire and in so doing had to step on the burning logs with his bare feet.

753 776

[50] On a later occasion I discussed these procedures thoroughly and in detail with the chief doctor, Kasi, and with Dube and the other doctors. One of the most striking aspects of the entire ceremony is perhaps the absence of the mysterious and the magical. These little spirits of sickness are not magical creatures but, in the eyes of the Bushmen, commonplace realities. The Bushmen know very well that many illnesses are not caused by the spirits of sickness alone. If someone eats something that has gone bad, he will become ill and will be given an emetic. If someone is wounded by a shot, the wound will be treated. If the injured person has pains only in the wound and otherwise feels all right, then no spirit of sickness has entered into him. If he feels sick all over, however, then he is possessed by a spirit of sickness. These little spirits of sickness are called dsao; they are little yellow men with a fat belly and a little tail. They obey the other spirits, which, as described above, include the ordinary [775] spirits from the bodies of deceased persons, the spirits who live among the stars, and the chief spirit (/Nawa) himself. [Fig. 20 appears here.]

Finally, even the "great captain" can send the dsao directly over a person. /Nawa can do this with or without the consent of the "great captain"; the smaller spirits act on their own authority or at the command of these powers.

756 776

The doctors have their supernatural power directly from the "great capitain"; they are as powerful as /Nawa and stronger

/252 cont./

535 The men standing around now attempt to catch the pumpkin as it flies through the air, and the women simulate great indignation when one of the men succeeds in doing so. This man then cuts up the pumpkin with a knife so that a new ball is required in order to continue the game.

Another dance, in which principally men participate, could be designated as the bird dance. The men dance in a circle, while the women stand around the circle, clap their hands, and [534] sing. The men wear dance bangles around their ankles, which are circlets of dried bean pods whose kernels rattle at every step and in this way strongly accentuate the dance rhythm. The steps of the dance are short, scarcely half a foot long, so that the progress of the dancers in the circle is quite slow. The vigor of the stepping or stamping on the ground alternates rhythmically. At the same time a number of symbolic gestures is performed. The most respected of the dancers has tied to his forehead a large eagle's beak decorated with glass and iron beads; he frequently makes a motion of hacking with the beak, and then, by slowly raising his arms, suggests the eagle's calm gliding in the air. Another dancer carries a bird's nest in his hand during the entire dance. At a certain stage, the dancers go through the motion of picking up fruit from the ground by bending down and making scooping motions in the air just above the ground. Shortly thereafter, some men dance towards the women and perform gestures as though they wanted to seize one of the women surrounding them.

535 Suddenly one of the dancers seems about to faint. A spectator
786 whom I questioned concerning the significance of this action told me that the Mukuru (Herero term for God) was in him. Other dancers, maintaining their dance step all the while, stand around the possessed person, try to help him, and cool him with fanning until he suddenly collapses with a piercing shriek. The bystanders catch him and carry him off to one side while the others go on dancing. The "doctor" now concerns himself with the unconscious [755] person; he blows twice in each ear and once on his forehead. Visibly, consciousness now returns and soon the one possessed is able to rise and dance again.

533 /253/ The musical accompaniment is supplied solely by the women; however, the dancing men are not entirely silent. Every

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
GiKwe

At last a few more women joined the singers and the singing mounted, the voices took on several parts. At last the men began to join, dancing toward the circle in twos and threes, moaning the song in their throats, leaning on long staffs, their coming heralded by the dry, loud staccato of their rattles.

The men came from different directions, and they stood so tall and danced so strongly, with their muscles standing out on their necks, that their coming was like the coming of bull antelope, they were so radiant of strength and tension, they were so lithe and male. They came together out of the trees and, without the slightest change of pace, arranged themselves around the dance circle, wheeling slowly, one after the other, and the dance began.

The air was hot, the sun was shining strongly, the fire was sending a shuddering cloud of heat around the dancers, and as the dancers moved almost imperceptibly faster and faster, Gai suddenly flung his arms into the air and with a piercing shriek crashed to the ground. He landed stiffly with a bounce, his head cracking. On the ground he writhed and groaned, and Ukwane pulled him by the arms to remove his body from the dance circle.

Gai was in deep trance. Ukwane was ministering to Gai's body because Gai's spirit had rushed away.

Bushmen say that when the medicine in a medicine man becomes stimulated by a dance, warmed by the fire and by the heat of the man's body, the man's spirit may leave him, causing his body to fall because there is nothing there to hold it up, and fly into the veld, where it seeks out the evil that is troubling people. Some medicine men in this way have seen the spirits of the dead, some have seen the great god. At another dance we once attended, one man's spirit rushed into the veld, where it came upon a pride of lions that had been

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
GiKwe

774 troubling the people by their constant presence and by their
756 deafening roars at night. The man's spirit spoke with the
535 lions, defied them, and ordered them away, and the lions did go; they troubled the people no longer.

786 When the spirit returns, the medicine man comes to him-
756 self, as Gai did presently. He stood up and ran into the veld,
535 gaining speed as he went. Far out in the veld he screamed, a shriek of definace, then turned and charged back toward the dance fire. He passed through the dance like a wind through dry leaves; the people ducked aside and shrank away from his feet, then settled together when he had gone by. Gai shrieked again, turned himself, and rushed back, charging bull-like toward the fire again; this time Ukwane seized his arms and though Gai plowed forward, Ukwane hung on, dragging behind with all his weight, until at last Gai fell headlong into the dance fire and his hair burst into flames.

Ukwane snatched him out and slapped out the fire in his hair, and Gai, his mouth open and his eyes quite wild, sparks still falling from his head like stars, strained against Ukwane's hands. At last he broke away.

786 In a moment he bent slowly over the fire and washed his
756 hands in the flames, then went to one of the women in the
535 circle of singers and, placing one hand on her chest, the other
783 on her back, shuddered and groaned as he sucked the evil from her, then straightened suddenly and shrieked the evil into the air. In this way Gai cured all the people, followed as he went by Ukwane, who now held Gai's arm to keep him upright. Before long, Gai had fallen again exhausted and was dragged by the ankles to a place in the shade.

786 I looked at him and saw that his eyes were closed, his eye-
756 lids puffed, and thought he seemed unconscious. His breath
535 came rasping through his mouth and nose, and his pulse, showing in "the heart's place," seemed very quick. But he

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Gikwe

was all right; no one paid any attention to him as they would have had he not been well. His baby came to watch him, though, and gazed down into his swollen face.

It was very hot. The dancers and the women singing steamed with perspiration, first becoming gold in color, then ash white as dust stuck to them. Soon the women felt that they had sung enough, their feelings showing clearly in the diminished vigor of their songs, until finally the singing faded out entirely and the dance stopped. The men complained, but the women would sing no more and presently everyone had drifted away, leaving only the children wheeling slowly around the track worn by the dancers' feet, dancing soberly, carefully, without music, and Gai, who now lay prone and forgotten in the dust, in the shade of a little tree.

Hours later, when even the children had wandered back to the werfs and had joined their parents, who were tired from the exercise and were taking afternoon naps, Gai came to himself once more; he sat up and wiped his face, got slowly to his feet, and walked slowly home to sleep, next to his wife beside their fire.

All the Bushmen were asleep but Twikwe. Some people lay on their backs with their arms shading their eyes, their mouths open, some on their bellies, their arms and legs sprawled. All the young boys except Giamakwe lay like puppies, tangled together in a knot of arms and legs, for even in sleep they would not be parted. Giamakwe slept at a little distance from the others on his side with his body bent backward into a U, his head almost touching his buttocks, as limp and supple as a young snake or a young cat that drapes over your hand. Even Nhwakwe was fast asleep, lying on his belly and using as his couch his father's body, his head on his father's chest. Both were deep in slumber, Nhwakwe snoring

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

535 854 kaross, and carried them to their mother; in this way, one by one, the dancing babies were eliminated and the circle was left to the men.

535 The dance went on all night, reaching a climax after mid-
●786 night when the moon was high and sailing overhead. The medicine men were seized with trances that shook their bodies and rattled their teeth and sent them rushing headlong into the black shadows to curse at the spirits of the dead. Dust mounted, the sound of the high singing and the rattles was deafening, and even in the pauses between dances the medicine men screamed.

535 When hours had passed, when the moon was low and only its thick red glow showed on the horizon, the dance reached a lull and many people went home. Soon only a core of dancers and singers remained, perhaps twenty people in all. These were the strong young men, wiry enough to have withstood ten hours of dancing, and the old widows and middle-aged women, those who had no small children to worry them, women who were tougher than the young girls and did not mind that they felt tired. It is a strong thing to dance all night; it brings powerful, enduring medicine, and these few people, willing to withstand fatigue and cold, wore away the night to dance for the medicine of the rising sun.

When the moon was down and the dance fire had burned to embers, was almost out, I went to the veld to gather firewood. Just then the first stars began to dim in the soft, cold air, the eastern sky turned pale; faintly, the first birds began
535 533 to cry, and from where I stood in the veld I heard the song change to the sun-dance. The song lasted only for a moment, as the singers acknowledged the paleness, and a little later, as the light in the east became brighter and the colors of the

!Kung RITUAL LIFE is sparse, but one means of reaching out to the infinite is a state of trance that may come in the course of dancing. The man being supported, above, is in such a state. The !Kung believe that a man in trance can take away a person's sickness and throw it back at the god who sent it.

786
155

Il: Marshall E-5 (1950-1955) 1958 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

[P.70]

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

782 821 [539]

O galopen,
O galopen,
Do ye not know me?
Ye do not seem to know my hut.

Then they speak to the Rain itself:—

Thou shouldst put thy tail between thy legs,
For the women are looking shocked at thee;
Thou shouldst put thy tail between thy legs for the children.

The Rain seems here to be thought of as a magic animal ridden by spirits."

791 821 Certain magicians have power over the Rain, and can cause it to come or stay away, as they please. These powers remain with them even after death, and just as in life they are asked for rain, so when they are dead, they may also be entreated to send it. Other magicians have a similar power over the wind, */khwe*, and are protected by it. The howling of the wind is believed to forebode evil; it tells the beasts of prey where to find people, and when it blows strongly they can approach the huts unheard. In the mythology the wind [773] is represented as having formerly been a man, which now wears the form of a bird.[1]

773 776 [184] [794] Among the Bushmen of Basutoland and the Orange Free State we meet again with tales about the Mantis, differing but slightly from those of the Cape. He seems, however, to have been here the object of a definite cult as well. According to Arbousset, it was believed that *'Kaang* (i.e. */kaggen*) or, as he was also termed, *'Kue-'akeng-'teng*, "the man (master) of all things," causes life and death and gives [761] [821] or refuses rain. All the animals have special marks which he has put [825] upon them; deficiency of game is attributed to him, and he is invoked for success in the chase. He is also worshipped in times of famine 796 535 and before going to war, when the *mo'koma* or "dance of blood" is performed all through the night. This dance Orpen's informant, [773] Qing, described as follows: "*Cagn* (i.e. */kaggen*)[2] gave us the song of this dance, and told us to dance it, and people would die from it, and he would give charms to raise them again. It is a circular dance of men and women, following each other, and it is danced all night. ● [786] Some fall down, some become as if mad and sick, blood runs from the noses of others whose charms are weak, and they eat charm medicine, in which is burnt snake powder.

[1] Bleek, *Bushman Texts*, 17; Lloyd, *Bushman Material Collected*, 9, 20–1; Bleek and Lloyd, *Bushman Folklore*, 195–9, 393–7 *et passim*; D. F. Bleek, *Bushman Folklore*, 307–9.

[2] In some orthographies, especially that used for the Zulu-Xosa languages, the symbol *c* represents the dental click, written / in the standard orthography for Bushman and Hottentot languages. *Cagn* is therefore merely another way of writing */kaggen*; both represent the same sounds. [104]